

And this administration has been a good friend of the auto industry in many, many ways as you—and we have worked hard, and we are proud of the success that they're now enjoying.

But the one thorny problem that never seems to get solved is the inaccessibility of the Japanese markets, not only to autos, but also to auto parts—in some ways, an even bigger problem for us in the near term. And we have taken a very strong line here because we've tried all those other things and they have not worked. So we are going to have to be very strong, and to be strong you have to be prepared to take strong action if your words fail.

Ms. Montgomery. So thumbs up on sanctions?

The President. So thumbs up on very strong responses, but my trade negotiator, Mickey Kantor, is in the middle of these negotiations, and he has done a great job. I think he is the best Trade Ambassador we have ever had, at least in the last 20 years. He has been very tough. He's opened more markets, taken more actions, succeeded in doing things that had never been done before. We're even selling rice in Japan, something we never thought we could do.

The last big trade hurdle we have is the auto markets and the auto parts markets in Japan. And I do not want to say anything in this interview that complicates his life. I can just tell you, the United States is committed to taking strong action. We are taking a tough position. It doesn't matter what anybody says in my administration; I support the line that Ambassador Kantor has taken. It is my line. It is my conviction. We have done everything we could do, and it is not in the interest of the Japanese government or people to be in the position they're in now.

NOTE: The interview began at 11:25 a.m. The President spoke by telephone from the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on Proposed Legal Reform Legislation

May 4, 1995

The Senate is engaged in the laudable goal of seeking to reform our legal system. Yesterday

they went much too far by adopting an amendment to cap punitive damages in all civil lawsuits. In its present form the Senate bill sharply limits the damages paid by many classes of offenders who deserve to pay much more to their victims for the harm they have inflicted upon them.

The bill now before the Senate might be called the "Drunk Drivers Protection Act of 1995", for what it does is insulate drunk drivers and other offenders from paying appropriate amounts of punitive damages justified by their deeds. I insist that we hold drunk drivers fully responsible. When they cause injury and death to innocent adults and children, we should throw the book at them, not give them a legal limit on damages to hide behind.

The Senate should reconsider its position. At the least, it should remove damage caps on lawsuits involving drunk drivers, murderers, rapists, and abusers of women and children, despoilers of our environment like the Exxon *Valdez* and perpetrators of terrorist acts and hate crimes.

All of these receive undeserved protection from the present bill. The Senate should reserve its compassion for the people who deserve it. If this bill comes to my desk as it is now written I will veto it, and therefore I encourage the Senate not to vote to limit debate on the bill at this time.

The administration supports the enactment of limited, but meaningful, product liability reform at the Federal level. Any legislation must fairly balance the interests of consumers with those of manufacturers and sellers.

Message on the Observance of the 50th Anniversary of the Allies' Victory in Europe: V-E Day, 1995

May 4, 1995

As we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of V-E Day, a grateful nation remembers all of the brave Americans who served in World War II.

In the spring of 1945, after almost six years of fighting, the war in Europe came to a dramatic close. As word of German General Jodl's surrender in Reims spread around the